

# **THE CATHOLIC MIND**

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## **A MESSAGE OF PEACE**

**POPE PIUS XII**



## **DIVINE LAW OF THE FAMILY**

**ARCHBISHOP CICOGNANI**



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# THE CATHOLIC MIND

VOL. XXXVII

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## Easter Message of Peace

POPE PIUS XII

*The Holy Father's Easter homily delivered in Latin on Easter Sunday in the Basilica of St. Peter's, April 9, 1939.*

*Reprinted from The London Tablet.*

**S**INCE it is the feast of Easter which gives Us this opportunity of greeting you with all the joy of a father's heart, We declare to you, Most Eminent Cardinals, Venerable Brethren of the Episcopate, Prelates and Priests of the Roman clergy, to you Members of the Religious Orders, and to you Our most beloved children, the faithful Christian people, for whose devoted numbers even this immense church of St. Peter is all too small, We say to you that there is no more fitting way in which to introduce what We propose for your consideration than to repeat those most beautiful words which our Divine Master, raised up from the dead, spoke on this day to His disciples, "Peace be to you" (John xx. 19). Behold a greeting of peace, behold an omen of peace indeed!

It was indeed as "the Prince of Peace" (Is. ix. 6) that the Redeemer of mankind was foretold to the world that awaited His coming. It was with the

Angelic choirs singing "Glory to God in the highest: and on earth Peace to men of good will" that He was born into the world (Luke ii. 14). Our Redeemer stood forth, the herald and ambassador of Peace, and, in the words of Saint Paul, "He preached the gospel of Peace" (Eph. ii. 17).<sup>1</sup> Nor has this Peace been made void by the disputes and the struggles. For Christ our Lord, when "death and life engaged in marvelous fight," He fought unto death itself, bought this Peace at the price, as it were, of His blood, won it as the pacifying fruit of the victory He gained, "by the blood of His cross, whether the things in earth, or the things that are in heaven" (Coloss. i. 20).

With good reason therefore does the apostle Saint Paul not only repeat, time and again, his invocation, abounding in comfort, "God of Peace, Lord of Peace" (Rom. xv. 33; xvi. 20; 1 Cor. xiv. 33; Philip. iv. 9; 1 Thess. v. 23; 2 Thess. iii. 16; Hebr. xiii. 20) but, taking up yet once again, as it were, the word of the prophets of old (Mic. v. 5) declare Jesus Christ to be Himself our Peace (Eph. ii. 14).

Such are the thoughts which, at this moment, We think it profitable for all to note and to reflect upon, that their spirits may be raised up and refreshed—at this moment when all mankind is so earnestly crying out for peace, is so desirous of peace, so concerned to invoke peace. "For such is the great goodness of peace that . . . nothing is to man more welcome hearing, of all desirable things there is none he more longs for. There is nothing his invention can devise that can better it" (St. Augustine *De Civitate Dei* xix. 11).

But today, more perhaps than at any other time, it is the words of Jeremias that best describe the situation, who portrays for us men crying "Peace, Peace: and there was no peace" (Jer. vi. 14; viii. 11; Ezech. xiii. 10). On all sides, indeed, wherever we turn our gaze, it is a sad spectacle that awaits us. For in every

<sup>1</sup> *Evangelizavit Pacem.*

part of the world we can descry great numbers of men greatly disturbed, anxious as to their fate, tormented with fearful misgivings, that seem to hint at still more frightful things about to come. A fearsome anxiety possesses the souls of men, as though worse dangers yet were hanging over them in direful menace.

How far removed is this unhappy state of things from that serene, secure "tranquillity of order" which is bound up with peace really worthy of its name!

And yet, how can there be real and solid peace while even men with a common nationality, heedless of their common stock or their common fatherland, are torn apart and kept asunder by intrigues and dissensions and the interests of factions? How can there be peace, We repeat, while hundreds of thousands of men, millions even, lack work? For work is not only, for every man, a means of decent livelihood, but it is the means through which all those manifold powers and faculties with which nature, training and art have endowed the dignity of the human personality, find their necessary expression, and this with a certain natural comeliness. Who is there, then, who cannot see how, in such crises of unemployment as those our own time experiences, huge multitudes are created, through this very lack of work, of men utterly wretched, whose unhappy condition is worsened by the bitter contrast it presents with the pleasures and luxurious living of others altogether unconcerned about these armies of the needy? Who does not see how these poor men fall an easy prey to others whose minds are deceived by a specious semblance of truth, and who spread their corrupting teaching with ensnaring attractions?

Moreover, how can there be peace, if there be lacking between the different States that common, equitable judgment of reason and consent of minds, which have been the power guiding the nations of the world along the shining road of civil progress? When, on

the contrary, solemnly sanctioned treaties and pledged faith are stripped of that force and security which plighted faithfulness implies and by which it is strengthened, if this force and security be taken away it becomes every day more difficult to lessen the increase of armaments and to pacify the minds of men, twin desires today of all men everywhere.

We therefore exhort all, as this fearful storm approaches, to make their way back to the King of Peace, the Conqueror of Death, from whom we have heard the comforting words "Peace be to you." May He bountifully grant to us that peace He promised, His own peace, which the world cannot give, that peace which alone can calm and allay the fears and the confusion of men's minds. "My peace I give you; not as the world giveth do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor fear" (John xiv. 27).

Now with men it is so ordered that their outward tranquillity must be the reflection of something within. Whence the first care must be to bring about peace in men's souls. If peace be lacking to any man's soul, let him have a care, as soon as may be, to seek it. If he already possesses peace of soul, let him diligently foster it, guard it and keep it unharmed. For on this very day, when He first gave Himself, risen from the dead, to the sight of the Apostles, Christ our Lord, not without a most weighty determination, willed to add to His greeting of peace that most precious gift of peace, the Sacrament of Penance. He so willed it that on this solemn day of His Resurrection, there should arise that institution which restores and renews in souls the life which is divine, and which is the victory of life over death, that is over sin. To This inexhaustible fount of pardon and of peace, our loving mother the Church most earnestly, in this sacred pascal time, calls all her children. And if all and each of them would hearken to her voice, zealously, willingly, what a rich and flourishing life in

Christ would be theirs! And, moreover, what serene enjoyment would be theirs, of that peace, through which, lovingly and perfectly obedient to the Divine Redeemer, they would be able to conquer the enticements of pleasurable desires. "Would your spirit see itself fitted to conquer your lusts?" we ask with Saint Augustine. "Let it subject itself to the Higher Power and it shall triumph over the lower: and you shall be filled with peace, true, certain, peace in most orderly guise. What is the scheme of this peace?"<sup>2</sup> God ruling the mind: the mind ruling the body: there is not any more perfect scheme of things."

You see, therefore, Venerable Brethren and most dear children, how Peace, in the true sense, is built upon a single and most firm foundation. That is to say it is built upon the eternal God, to acknowledge whom, to honor and to worship whom, to obey whose commandments, is a duty laid upon every living creature. To diminish the obedience due to the Divine Creator, to regulate it out of existence, is thus nothing else than to throw into confusion and to break up entirely the tranquillity of the individual citizen's life, of the life family, of the separate nations and, ultimately, of the whole human race. For it is God alone who "will speak peace unto His people: and unto His saints: and unto them that are converted to the heart" (Ps. lxxxiv). At His bidding alone, who is the supreme defender of Justice, the supreme dispenser of Peace, "have Peace and Justice kissed" (ib.). And this is to be expected seeing that, as Isaias sings, "The work of justice shall be peace, and the service of the justice quietness, and security for evermore" (Isa. xxxii. 17).

This is but natural for just as without order in human affairs there can be no peace, so, likewise, if justice be done away with, there can be no such thing as order.

Now justice requires that to lawfully constituted

<sup>2</sup> *Quid est ordo pacis huius?*

authority there be given that respect and obedience which is its due; that the laws which are made shall be in wise conformity with the common good; and that, as a matter of conscience, all men shall render obedience to these laws. Justice requires that all men acknowledge and defend the sacrosanct rights of human freedom and human dignity, and that the infinite wealth and resources with which God has endowed the whole of the earth, shall be distributed, in conformity with right reason, for the use of all His children. Justice, finally, requires this too, that the activities of the saving Catholic Church, the unerring mistress of the truth, the inexhaustible fountain of the life of the spirit, the chiefest nurse of civil society, shall not suffer any disparagement, still less any prohibiting impediment. But if the noble reign of justice is usurped by the arms of violence, will anyone then marvel if the new age now dawning shows forth not the much-desired brightness of peace, but the dark and bloody furies of war? It is also part of the office of justice to determine and to maintain the norm of that order in human affairs which is the primary and the principle foundation of lasting peace. But justice only, and alone, cannot overcome the difficulties and obstacles which very frequently lie in the way of establishing a tranquillity that will endure. If Charity be not joined with strict and rigid justice, in a kind of brotherly bond, the eye of the mind is very easily clouded and thereby hindered, so that it does not discern the rights of another; the ears become deaf, so that they do not hear the voice of that Equity which has the power, by explanation to the wise man willing to listen, to make clear in reasonable and orderly fashion whatever may be matter of dispute, even the bitterest and the rudest of differences.

We must, of course, be understood, when We speak here of Charity, to mean that effective and generous Charity which "urgeth us" (2 Cor. v. 14), and which



brings it about that, "they also which live, may not now live to themselves, but to Him that died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 15; that Charity, in fine, moved by which Christ our Lord took "the form of a servant" (Phil. ii. 7, that we all might be made brethren in Him who is "the first-born" (Thom. viii. 29), children of that same God, heirs of that same Kingdom, called to the joys of that same eternal happiness.

If the minds of mortal men would somewhat drink in the kindness of this love, and in it repose themselves, then, beyond all doubting, the light of peace would begin to shine upon the laboring human race. Then, to the irritant of wraths in movement there would indeed succeed the peace of the mind that is reasoning; to exaggerated and unbridled demands, the benevolent cooperation of helping effort; so that trustful repose and serenity would take the place of all that dreadful unrest of mind.

Let men seek once more that road by which they may journey back to friendly alliances in which the convenience and the profit of each are carefully considered in a just and kindly system; in which the sacrifices of individuals shall not be made an excuse for the acquisition of the more valuable properties of the human family; in which, finally, faith publicly given shall flourish as an example to all men of good will.

To the end that these effects may follow, and that these Our most cherished desires may be brought to a happy fulfilment, We cannot refrain from repeating, to all the peoples of the world and to their rulers, that fervent invitation, exhortation even, to a Peace bred of justice and charity, which We addressed to them in the very moment, almost, of Our elevation to the Supreme Pontificate.

First of all, therefore, We lift Our hands and eyes to "the King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (1 Tim. vi.

15), beseeching Him with the prayers which, in these Easter solemnities, are used in the sacred liturgy of the Eucharistic Sacrifice: O Lord God, who through the voice of the Church, calls all Thy children in these days to these most sacred mysteries, to the divine banquet of Thine own most holy Body and Blood, Thou who does desire to see all and everyone gathered at this sacrament of the altar, which is the most precious gift of Thy love in our regard, and at the same time a sign and a bond of that Love which joins us in brotherly alliance, do Thou, O Lord God, "pour forth into our hearts the spirit of Thy charity, that Thou mayest bring to a harmony of brotherly Love those whom Thou hast fed with these Easter Sacraments." Amen.

## **The Divine Law on Family Life**

**MOST REV. AMLETO GIOVANNI CICOGNANI**

*Address delivered by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States at the National Conference on Christian Marriage, Washington, D. C., March 19, 1939.*

*N. C. W. C.*

**I**S it really known just what matrimony is, and what a family should be according to the laws established by the Creator? Do the Faithful at least observe these laws, and do they cultivate sufficiently the virtues that are essential to marriage and the family? Alas, the reality is often lamentable, and we find it necessary and urgent to insist without respite and everywhere in regard to this matter: "Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine" (II Timothy, iv, 2).

The history of Christianity reveals that wise legislators and rulers, corresponding to the pastoral solicitude of the Catholic priesthood, have always sought by the best means at their disposal to surround the family with the strongest possible legal protection, in order to guarantee its unity and solidarity, well knowing that from the family the civic order derives a firm basis. Society is sound, when the family is sound; a people is strong when its families are constituted with profound unity, because the family is the first call of the social organism, and in it future citizens receive their first impressions and basic formation.

The family, so sadly perturbed in our times, cannot be brought back to its true dignity, except through those laws that the Church has received from its Divine Founder. . . . Whereby we shall also obtain the desired improvement of society; because, just as from a withering trunk there spring even worse branches and bad fruit, so when corruption contaminates, it also infects the individual citizens. On the contrary, when the family is ordered to a Christian life, the single members will gradually learn to love religion and piety, to abhor false doctrines, to practise virtue, to respect superiors and to restrain egoistic sentiments which so profoundly degrade human nature (Leo XIII, Enc. *Inscrutabili*, April 21, 1878).

### THE CAUSE OF DISORDERS

Nevertheless, an unwisely conceived spirit of liberty, materialistic notions of life, unrestrained passions in persons of every rank, and bad examples continue to spread and to increase prejudices, confusion, disorders and dissolution in the midst of families, so that we are losing continually the idea of those holy and sweet bonds on which the Creator founded married life, paternity and maternity, and the relations between parents and children.

The Catholic Church, depositary, custodian and asserter of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, its Divine Founder, has never ceased to put forward clearly and

entirely these principles and teachings, even at the cost of rebellion by crowned heads, of persecutions and fierce struggles; and these principles and teachings have been collected and masterfully explained by the Sovereign Pontiffs, especially by Leo XIII in the Encyclical, *Arcanum Divinae Sapientiae* (Feb. 10, 1880), and by Pius XI of holy memory in the Encyclical, *Casti Connubii* (Dec. 31, 1930), always with the purpose of protecting and safeguarding marriage and the family, to keep them immune from those errors and vices, which unfortunately are so prevalent, and for which a justification is sought in legislation based on egoism, on badly advised economic theories and worldly ideologies.

#### DEVIATIONS FROM NATURE

We must first propose to ourselves a question of principle: Is it rational and possible morally to trace new paths for institutions such as marriage and the family? Both of them originate from God, and both of them form the basis of all humanity. Now that which is the basis of all humanity, cannot but come from nature, that is from God, nor is it lawful for man, either individually or when constituted in human authority, to change its course. Nor can this be done without changing the substance and essence of the institutions. It is a well-known principle that the natural law is the basis of all human legislation. Civil society must have it as a foundation, because it is "the eternal law itself impressed in the rational creature." Laws, therefore, that are in opposition to or in discord with it, would no longer bring order, but disorder and the disintegration of society, because there can be no genuine legislation that is contrary to the natural law.

Marriage and family not only have their entire foundation in the natural law, but in respect to society they may be compared to the natural law itself. Both

of them tend to the universal end of humanity and society, they come from the universal cause, from God and from His Divine Wisdom. God ordered them for man, that the design of creation might be fulfilled; the family came from the mind of God who gave laws to the first couple with the explicit mission of multiplying, of living in an indissoluble bond, and of educating its offspring; by Him were determined both the constitution of the family and its fundamental prerogatives. It is against nature therefore when the will of man, economic factors, or temporary and changing motives attempt to overturn and disorganize these great works of the Creator.

#### CHRISTIANITY ALONE GIVES COMPLETE UNITY AND PERFECTION

The unity of the family has been broken—that unity which is not only a natural and externally visible bond, but which is specially intimate, spiritual, essentially sacred and religious, and most of all supernatural. Family unity is unity of life for parents and children. Christianity by the revelation of the Divine Master has clearly shown to man how he must attain his last end. His life, his thoughts and actions must be directed to this end with a forceful unity on the lofty planes of grace to which man has been elevated by the Redeemer. The life of man has been rendered, in some measure, divine by the Founder of Christianity and Author of the Sacraments, and matrimony is “a great Sacrament: in Christ and in the Church” (Ephesians, v, 32).

#### CONTRASTING PRINCIPLES

“Our reason is self-sufficient” is the motto of rationalist philosophy, and “the dignity of man is entirely in his nature.” But consider the disastrous consequences of such an autonomy of man, in regard

to marriage and the family. There are innumerable examples both in the case of those who profess such principles, and among those of the Faithful who do not practise the Christian doctrine, in allowing themselves to be overcome and persuaded by passion and materialistic motives. By divorce, condemned by Christ, the unity of the family is broken, yes, and that of human life; hearts are separated, affections misdirected; ruinous incentives to infidelity suggested; seeds of discord spread among families; the dignity of woman is diminished and cheapened; the good moral education of children becomes impossible, as they see the authors of their life first divided, then joined in other unions, legalized by civil law, but which no moral principle can justify. Christian teaching is clearly in opposition to divorce: "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother. . . . And they shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh" (Mark, x, 6-8). This is the unity demanded. "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery" (Mark, x, 11, 12). Here we have dispersion, the source of terrible private and social disorders.

When the human mind seeks to carry on alone, it labors to find reasons justifying even the suppression of the purpose of marriage, the procreation of offspring. Birth control has become a pseudo-science; and its tools are books, magazines, advertising, medicines and instruments for impeding and suppressing life, of which God is the first author, and whose Divine Omnipotence is thus frustrated in its plans. But "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Corinthians, iii, 19). The effects of this empty scientific wisdom that does away with the teachings and

commandments of God are these: The family loses its real possessions, and the principal one is fecundity; the love of husband and wife languishes, since it is fecundity that renders it more stable; the dignity of woman is again diminished; the family is oppressed by the melancholy of solitude, because it is lacking the smile of those gifts of God, children. It is true that children necessitate work and sacrifices, but they are the continuation of families, and it is by means of this very work and sacrifice that the integrity and unity of family life is consolidated; labor and sacrifice are the precise duty and the necessary heritage of man, and they constitute the good and glorious traditions of a family; the more numerous the offspring, the less desolating are the empty spaces that death gradually creates.

The human wisdom of unguided reason becomes even more daring in its sophisms: prevention of disease, safeguarding of hygiene, strange and false rules of eugenics, financial remedies, economic measures. Instead it brings about exactly the opposite effect: diseases increase, neurasthenia spreads, mental cases become more numerous, and economic crises more frequent in the selfish abundance that causes deviations and disorders in living; while on the other hand, the necessity of the multitude of poor stimulates their genius and adds to their energies. Again the words of Christ resound: "He that findeth his life, shall lose it" (Matthew, x, 39). In such complicated problems affecting all humanity it is not difficult to find individual cases that seem to support the thesis of those who would justify their prejudices and illegitimate norms. It is easy to sophisticate when such wide questions are judged by personal and private interests. But is it wisdom to neglect or forget the last end of man? And where does there remain a place for the Christian concept of human life? Life is the means to attain our last end, it is a warfare (Job, vii, 1), a

period of transition and trial (Hebrews, xiii, 14; I Corinthians, vii, 31), wherein every one is called to rise spiritually, to gain happiness by carrying his cross, the cross that brings resurrection, life and glory.

The Divine teaching is on the other hand most clear: "Increase and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis, i, 28). Thus marriage is constituted by God, its primary end placed in the production of children, the earth is granted to man that it may be cultivated, and with work the right and happiness of enjoying its fruits. To this fundamental precept must be added the teachings of the Gospel on marriage and the family, namely the doctrine of Our Lord, which alone gives finality, meaning and unity to the life of man. "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John, viii, 12).

## The Christian Woman

VIRGIL MICHEL, O.S.B.

*Reprinted from Orate Fratres.*

THE purpose of an international movement among Catholic women of Europe, the *Union internationale des Ligues Féminines Catholiques*, has been that "of contributing to the rechristianization of society by christianizing the family, and of christianizing the family by making the daughter, the wife, and the mother Christian." This is in complete harmony with the entire tradition of the Church. The eminent Catholic historian, Godfrey Kurth, called attention to the fact that wherever the faith of Christ has triumphed it was the women who helped to attain the victory. "They conquered the world from the bosom of their homes by converting their husbands, by in-



structing their children. It was sufficient for them to be wives or mothers, in order to be by that very fact the collaborators of Providence in the education of peoples. The establishment of the kingdom of God in Europe is in great part the work of their patient and obstinate devotion."<sup>1</sup>

From its very beginning Christianity has raised motherhood to a most exalted and dignified position, that of cooperation in the very work of Christ's redemption. Through the mystery of the incarnation motherhood in the Blessed Virgin Mary was raised to the highest supernatural dignity that any mere human being could possibly attain. It was through this motherhood that the Redeemer came upon earth to save the entire world.

The Sacrament of Matrimony, which is the supernatural gateway to Christian motherhood, reflects unmistakably the dignified position of the wife and mother in the mind of Christ and the Church. First of all, the union of wife and husband is a reflection of and a special participation in the sublime mystery of the union of the Church and Christ, as the epistle of the nuptial Mass brings out so well in the famous words of Saint Paul. And so from early Christian times on, the Church was known also as the bride of Christ and as the mother of all the adopted brethren of Christ. The rite of marriage is administered, we know, not by the priest who is only the Church's witness in this instance, but by both parties to the marital union, not therefore by the man alone, but equally by the man and the woman. In the enactment of the rite, in the very words of the text, the woman is asked the same question as the man, she gives her consent in the same words as he does, and her consent is just as indispensable to the sacrament as his, no more so but also no less. Furthermore, the mutual duties of

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Croegaert, *La femme chrétienne et la restauration liturgique*, p. 3.

husband and wife, while reflecting the different temperaments and functions of the two, are nevertheless both matters of equal personal responsibility for them, between which there is little to choose, unless one were to hold that the husband has the more difficult task. The wife must render to the husband the obedience of genuine love, and the husband must render to the wife the love that will give up life for the beloved: "on the one hand respectful submission unto sacrifice; on the other, devoted love unto death."<sup>2</sup>

Christian marriage has a high role to play in God's scheme of the creation and redemption of man, and it can play none of its part except through motherhood. The purpose of a Christian marriage is by no means properly expressed in the procreation and education of children, unless the phrase is interpreted, as it really should be, in terms of the supernatural purposes of life. Then the purpose of marriage and motherhood is seen to be a true cooperation in the very work of God and Christ here on earth. "It does not consist merely in giving birth to and educating human beings, but in producing Christians, in increasing the number of the elect, in peopling heaven. To be the generatrix of saints, such is the function of the mother. And by showing us what saints owed to their mothers—a Saint Augustine, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Joan of Arc, a Curé d'Ars—history also shows us that the mothers have known how to fulfil this function. It is their work to replenish Christianity in the matter of apostles, priests, saints."<sup>3</sup> Christian motherhood thus has a high supernatural destiny, that of cooperating in the restoration of all things in Christ, of building up temples of the Holy Ghost, and of bringing ever new members into the Mystical Body of Christ.

This noble function of Christian marriage falls especially to the Christian woman to exercise from the very birth of a new child to its attainment of full

<sup>2</sup> Croegaert, *La liturgie nuptiale*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Croegaert, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

maturity. In fact, the entire work of rechristianization, as embodied in the scope of the liturgical movement, for instance, must find its first beginnings in the Christian home under the inspiration of the mother. It has been said in this regard: "There is much talk today of a liturgical movement, of a renewal of our holy liturgy and of the necessity of bringing it back into close contact with the Faithful. What can we women do as our share in the solution of this burning question? Is there not an apostolate here that literally cries for the cooperation of us women? The spiritual energies of the woman work with greatest efficacy in the family. The family, taught and inspired by its priestess, the mother, must become the cradle unto a new liturgical life."<sup>4</sup>

The mother is indeed a gardener of God doing a veritable priestly work in the Christian care of her children. It is she who has sent the child at the very beginning to the baptismal font of supernatural rebirth. But the seed of faith there sown into the child's soul by the hand of God will not sprout or germinate except in so far as the soil of the infant soul is tended and watered. This is the function of the mother. She is truly the priestess of the home; hers is the sacerdotal work of bringing the latent seeds of divine grace, the gifts of faith and of the Holy Ghost, to bud forth in the soul of the child, to sprout blossoms and to bear fruit in accordance with the developing age of the child. Unless the mother thus leads the child properly to God, the further agencies of school and social center later on can only in part undo the evil done to the child by maternal neglect. The mother has the privilege of being the first to instil into the heart of the child, not only the general truth of the fatherhood of God, Creator of all, but the still more wonderful truths of the birth of Christ on earth, of His continuation in the Church, the sublime truths of

our redemption as they continue to be living realities in all souls that beat in harmony with the pulse of the Church, and the duty of living out these truths in daily life, of forming the child into a shining model to the world of the resplendent truth of Christ. Not only does she lead her child to a knowledge and realization of these sublime truths, but she leads the child by hand unto the praying of these truths, unto the first actual living out its life of participation in the life and love of God.

As long as Christian motherhood functions as it should in the family, the influence of the mother will be a dominant one and will set the tone in favor of the cause of Christ. So long, also, there will be no degradation of woman possible, for that can come only when the sanctity of the family is given up. That is impossible for the Church of Christ, since Christ Himself has raised Christian marriage to the dignity of a sacrament and thus pointed the way to the high place that women must occupy in the scheme of His divine regeneration of mankind.

Abbé Croegaert says of woman and the Church that "in the measure and degree in which the Church has pursued the work of christianizing peoples, she has always found her most faithful ally in the Christian woman." <sup>5</sup> This is but one aspect of the wider truth that the fate of any civilization rests with its women. Any civilization that does not give woman her proper dignified position in life and does not allow her to function in such a way as to give full expression to her various abilities and her personality, cannot endure long. The fostering of a healthy civilization is possible only if woman is accorded and retains her proper dignity and position in life, and if she actively plays the part which nature assigns to her as an instrument in the spread of all that is good. It may be the men that make most of the individual intellectual

<sup>5</sup> *La femme chétienne et la restauration liturgique*, p. 3.

advances; but it is ever woman who on the one hand enkindles the spark of a better life in the souls of the young, and on the other keeps the flame actively burning in the hearts of the more mature, inspires them to a life expressive of the best in human nature.

Unfortunately our modern feminism is following the pattern of the later Roman period instead of the Christian ideal of which it is totally ignorant. According to the Christian ideal, woman is given a wide scope in the important professions of public life, but woman then uses her resultant opportunity and power in the furtherance of this same ideal of Christianity. In our day, woman is guided in her feminist movement by the prevailing philosophy of life, which is one of selfish individualism and material pleasure. If she steps out into the public professions, which her Christian predecessors had practiced with such beneficent results, it is acknowledgedly to get more out of life for herself, and not to do more real good in the world. The latter goal means self-denial and self-sacrifice, and nothing is farther from the spirit of modern feminism. That is why divorce is so rampant, and why personal pleasure, or glorified passion, supersedes the high ideals of the welfare of children, the sanctity of married life, and even justice itself, social justice above all. Women of today too often cultivate the appeals that address themselves to the lower nature of man, or again women seek their position of power and independence by becoming most like men, that is, distinctly unfeminine. It is greatly because of this that many social ills and evils are on the increase in our generations, that our conditions of life are in so many ways akin to those of decadent Rome. It is but another illustration of the old adage of *corruptio optimi pessima*—the corruption or perversion of that which is best ever turns out to be the worst kind of corruption.

For woman is by nature better adapted to respond

to and develop the best virtues of which human nature is capable, and especially to cooperate with God's grace in the elevation of these to the supernatural ideal of Christ. Her nature, unless artificially repressed or distorted, craves for the spiritual in a degree far above that of the average man. "The nature of woman needs to be imbued with spiritual values. She grasps them, in accordance with her being, deeply and permanently, guards them carefully, and injects them definitely into life. The feminine soul is much more intimately interwoven with the eternal than that of man." \*

The indictment of modern feminism made in terms of Christian ideals is not that woman is stepping beyond the home in her activities and taking part in the affairs of the world. It is rather that in doing so she has often abandoned all that is characteristically feminine in her nature. She has abandoned the home which is her first responsibility; and she has consciously abandoned herself unto assuming the coarseness of man, which is for her a desecration of natural sanctity and refinement. She has abandoned her God-given task of civilizing man for the pursuit of her individual earthly pleasure and satisfaction.

The possibilities for woman in regard to man are two: either to plunge him deeper into hell than man would descend by himself, or else to lead him farther up into heaven than man would ascend by himself. It is part and parcel of the general choice before us: the increased paganization of life or else the rechristianization of our life in terms of the true Christian spirit. There is some alarm over this situation and there has been talk of the downfall of Western culture. At all events, we are facing the growing chaos that is the result of the abandonment of the ideals of Christianity.

\* Abbot Herwegen, in the introduction to *Wintersig, Liturgie und Frömmigkeit*, p. vi.

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